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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 EB-11 FAA-00 COME-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ETRD ETRN US UR
SUBJ: INTERNATIONAL WEEKENDS TOUR PROGRAM TO USSR

REF: A) MOSCOW 7682 B) STATE 126323

1. ECON/COMMERCIAL COUNSELOR MET JULY 3 WITH NEW INTOURIST USA SECTION CHIEF IVAN P. ZAVORIN AND PROTOCOL CHIEF ALEKSANDR N. SIMCHENKO TO DISCUSS SUBJECT TOUR PROGRAM AND ASCERTAIN REASONS FOR ITS CANCELLATION, AS REQUESTED REFTEL B.

2. NOTING THAT THIS WAS INTERNATIONAL WEEKEND'S FIRST TOURIST PROGRAM TO THE USSR, ZAVORIN EXPLAINED THAT COMPANY HAD PROCEEDED WITHARRANGEMENTS FOR PROGRAM WITHOUT KEEPING INTOURIST FULLY INFORMED. AS RESULT, PROGRAM WHICH WAS FINALLY SCHEDULED TO BEGIN IN OCTOBER WOULD HAVE ALMOST CERTAINLY LED TO NUMBER OF PROBLEMS AND EMBARRASSING SITUATIONS, AND INTOURIST THEREFORE NOTIFIED COMPANY THAT IT UNABLE TO ACCEPT TOUR PROGRAM AT ALL THIS YEAR.

3. ZAVORIN CITED FOLLOWING FACTORS LEADING TO INTOURIST'S DECISION: SEVERE SHORTAGE OF HOTEL SPACE FOR LARGE-SIZE TOURIST GROUPS AS RESULT OF WORLD YOUTH FESTIVAL TO BE HELD IN MOSCOW IN NOVEMBER, AWKWARD TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS VIA BUS FROM HELSINKI TO LENINGRAD WHICH WOULD MAKE CONNECTIONS
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INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE IN WINTER SEASON,

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AND COMPANY' INSISTENCE ON INEXPENSIVE ACCOMMODATIONS IN MOSCOW WHICH WOULD MEAN LODGING TOUR GROUPS IN SECOND-CLASS MOZHAISKI HOTEL FAR FROM CITY CENTER. HOWEVER, ZAVORIN EMPHASIZED THAT INTOURIST'S DECISION WAS "NOT ENTIRELY" A CANCELLATION" BUT RATHER A POSTPONEMENT. HE ADDED THAT INTOURIST HAD JUST RECENTLY BEEN NOTIFIED BY INTERNATIONAL WEEKENDS THAT IT WISHED TO RESUME NEGOTIATIONS ON TOUR PROGRAM FOR 1974 AND THAT IN FACT THESE NEGOTIATIONS WERE NOW UNDERWAY.

4. COMMENT: IT APPEARS THAT INTOURIST TOOK DECISION TO SCRATCH INTERNATIONAL WEEKENDS TOUR PROGRAM FOR THIS FALL OUT OF GENUINE CONCERN THAT COMPLICATED AIR-BUS-AIR TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS DURING WINTER MONTHS AND LODGING OF LARGE NUMBERS OF AMERICAN TOURISTS IN REMOTE, SECOND-CLASS HOTEL COULD ONLY LEAD TO MANY LOGISTICAL PROBLEMS, COMPLAINTS, AND GENERALLY NEGATIVE REPERCUSSIONS. HOWEVER, ZAVORIN CLEARLY INDICATED THAT INTOURIST INTERESTED IN DISCUSSING TOUR PROGRAM FOR NEXT YEAR, EMBASSY THEREFORE RECOMMENDS THAT INTERNATIONAL WEEKENDS PURSUE NEGOTIATIONS FOR 1974, BEARING IN MIND SPECIFIC FACTORS WHICH LED TO CANCELLATION OF PROGRAM THIS YEAR.
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